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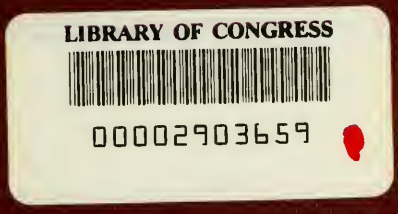
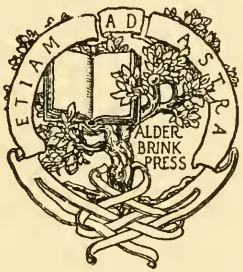


VAGRANTS

by

Georgia E. Bennett



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VAGRANTS

Perhaps these vagrants, tattered as they are,
and torn,
May find some friendly lodging for the night;
If not, there are broom and bracken on the
kindly hills,
And winter snows fall soft and light.

VAGRANTS

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VAGRANTS

CRAFTSMEN

The Work that his hands have made
Is the workman's delight;
Touch after touch well laid
It grows in his sight;
A bit of his dreaming soul
Shows in the tool's control—
  The soul of a lover.

The song that his notes have made
Is the singer's delight;
Careless and unafraid
He sings through the night;
Stray gleams and magic glints,
Lost dreams and hidden hints
  His song can discover.

Mine be the singer's joy,
The craftsman's delight,
Though but an idle toy
Come into light;
Still in the framing it
My soul may beauty hit,
Calm, may recover.

WHOM THE GODS LOVE—

The gods have loved me; they have given
  Length of laborious days,
A road that winds through gray glooms after
  The sun has spent its rays.

The gods have loved me; they have with-holden
  The flowering of easy delight,
The pleasant run of shallow laughter,
  Comfort that sleeps through the night.

The gods have loved me; they have given
  Loneliness that stays,
Longing that lasts to the grave, not after,
  Courage to walk their ways.

* * *

THE VAGRANT

I looked in at the door of your heart:—
Incense and candles and prayer,
And shy little loves that start
In the tremulous fire-light there.

But the voice of the wind on the hills,
The sound of white feet by the sea,
The calm, that the star-meadows fills,
Stirred the vagrant soul of me.

Incense, and candles, and prayer,—
White feet on a sea-strown floor!
The wind and the star-meadows fair!
Softly I closed the door.

A CANOE TRIP

Fourteen miles of lonely lakes!
The arrowy paddle dips
With the lithe arm's singing motion,
  There is not the sound a keen thought makes
  When silver-shafted, clean, it slips
  Out of a sea of emotion.

Fourteen miles! How quiet they sleep,
My friendly fellows, the trees
Miles down in the placid blue!
  Even so may a woman keep
  Love in her heart, hidden so deep
  That no eye ever knew.

Wind! a wandering wind that breaks
Into playful ripples the mirrowed show
Of shadows, lying at dream.
  Just so when a ripple of feeling shakes
  The face of a friend I know,
  I catch of his heart, a gleam.

Flash! The flash of a striking steel!
A king-fisher sure of his sleeping prey
Darts down from the hanging leaf.
  Pain like that poor mortals feel,
  When droning along through life, they
  Feel the dart of grief.

See! That snub-nosed otter slides
Right under my dripping prow
Sleek, and free from fear.
  So I slip on from day to day
  Living in a little now
  Counting it choice and dear.

Fourteen miles are left behind
Up to the wooden pier I go
Without the flicker of a breath.
So some other night I may find—
The new moon lying low—
That harbor men call death.

* * *

ON THE PRAIRIES

Before the wind the ripe grass bends,
Out from the swamp the red-wing sends
His raucous call.
Here in this sea of grass we lie
Beneath the blue cup of the sky
That covers all.

Your soft hand holds an arrow head
Chipped by some Indian long since dead
And fashioned true.
"They fought? For what?" "That no-one knows—
Like filmy spider-wort that blows
Your eyes are blue."

The grass will weave a coronal
For this wide plain, the red-wing call
A thousand years from now;
Then some old rusty bayonet
May make two lovers half forget
To seal their vow.

Blue grows the filmy spider-wort,
Down in the swamp the red-wings flirt;
"You say 'tis true
They conquered?" "Yes—No—Who knows—
See the grass run when the wind blows—
I know—your eyes are blue!"

* * *

TWILIGHT

That time the musk-winged moths wheel round
the garden-close,
Where misty purple flowers
Make twilight, while a little wandering wind that
blows
South-west
Comes whispering, whispering all the sun-burned
hours
To rest.
A pink-flushed harvest moon climbs bringing
light,
And cool, dew-hushed content breathes through
the night.

White moths, my noon-tide passions flit the
garden-close,
Aimless among the flowers,
While o'er my heart a little wandering wind that
blows
South-west
Comes whispering, whispering all the aching
hours
To rest,
And in the east, benignant, clear and bright
Burns the one star that brings content and night.

EVANESCENCE

I fashioned a house of desire and laughter
From ceiling to floor;
The grapes of passion hung from the rafter
And curtained the door.

But the wind of that grape was bitter laughter
When desire had fled,
And the dust bit deep into the rafter,
Till it fell on my head.

Then I fashioned a house of rainbow delights
And butterfly wings,
Of odours and sounds from the summer nights
When one bird sings.

Sunbeam and moonbeam form the shining rafter;
And there apart,
The spent leaves of roses and the wind's pure laughter
Fall on my heart.

* * *

"THE ULTIMATE FUTILITIES."

In a garden of paste-board and paper roses,
Under the light of a golden moon,
Made from the tinsel that encloses,
A lady's jewelled dancing shoon
Sang Pierrot and Pierrette.

"Ages, aeons and cycles pass,
But a love-charmed moment will perish never;
An age is a shadow in a glass,
But moon-light and love will live forever.

Forgotten the glory of Babylon!
But roses still cling to the ruined wall,
For roses will bloom for aye in the sun
While earthly kingdoms rise and fall.

Those dutiful houses built on the rock
Totter and crumble in a day
Struck by the force of an earthquake shock,
But a castle of dreams endures alway.

Diamonds grow dim with the centuries flight,
But a dew-drop with every day is born;
A child's sweet laughter welcomes the night,
And a child's fresh laughter wakes the morn.

Then shake off your duties and moral alarms
That blink like bats in the gloom nocturnal;
Gather dew-drops and dreams and moon-light
charms,
For roses and laughter and love are eternal."

Sang Pierrot and Pierrette.

* * *

BROKEN PROMISES

A little maid is standing by my side;
Soft as low bells on floating buoys at sea
She speaks, sweet-lipped and ardent-eyed,
"You promised me."

You promised me that with the climbing years
You would pluck beauty from the hill-tops down
And wear, as veiling darkness nears;
A starry crown;

That singing loves about your life should grow;
Like crocus in the springing April rain,
Sweet deeds fast hid beneath the snow
Should bloom again;

That all the little dreams we could invoke
To please our quaint desire should come to be
Before night fell, tall, gracious folk;
"You promised me."

"Oh, little, teasing maid, be still at last!
Broken with bitter frost our frail dreams are
Nor shows the night that creeps on fast
"A single star."

Yet still the pale hand clings to mine;
Reiterant as sunken bells at sea
The voice tolls on, the clear eyes shine
"You promised me."

* * *

MNEMOSYNE

I built a palace for my joy
With pillars shining white,
Where she and I without annoy
Should dream both day and night;
But or ever the evening fell,

Ghosts, the ghosts of joys long fled
With silent paces wove a spell,
With hands unseen they rang a knell
And my beautiful joy lay dead.

I made a garden for my love
Where the rose and the lily grew,
And the humming-bird hung poised above
The swinging bells so blue;
But a brown bird sang, low, low,
A song of the vanished years,
The dead loves stood in a silent row
Watching the new with a look, still and slow,
And my love was drowned in tears.

Then for my sorrow I wrought a cell
In a barren place apart,
There with my sorrow I thought to dwell
And hold her to my heart;
But a wind from the desert came,
Parched and hot with the feverish breath
Of countless sorrows without a name
That on former days had laid their claim,
And my sorrow shrivelled to death.

* * *

THE THREE MERCILESS ONES

The three merciless ones went begging,
For their garments had worn very thin;
They sought the scraps of compassion
To wrap their cold bodies in.

They came to the king's high castle;
"Your brothers we are," they said.
The king shook his sword. "No brothers
When your power and your pride are dead."

They knocked at the rich man's palace.
"Your splendor was ours!" they cried.
Silence their only answer.
In silence the echoes died.

They entered the desolate cottage
Of a man whom their laws had slain.
"We starve." The grief-broken woman
Softened at sight of their pain.

She kindled a fire for their warming,
She brought out her fine wheaten bread,
She gave them the robes of compassion
That had covered her husband's bed.

The three merciless ones went begging,
For their garments had worn very thin;
The king and the rich man denied them,
A poor woman took them in.

* * *

A MEXICAN LULLABY

Sleep little baby of mine
Safe on your mother's breast;
Sleep, little bud of the trumpet-vine,
Shut up your eyes and rest.

Out of the desert my sweet one came,
With the sweep of the wind and the smell of the
rain,
When the river flooded the sandy plain,
Out of a night of stress and pain,
Came my bud of the trumpet-vine.

Here for a spell you can rest
Here beneath the shade of the vine,
With the past and the future all unguessed
And only this moment for thine.

Then out to the desert you go again,
And all the joy and all the pain
Are but as the sound of the passing rain
(That leaves the blue sky without a stain)
On the leaves of the trumpet-vine.

But here for a spell you can lie
Safe on your mother's breast,
Between the yellow sands and the azure sky;
So shut up your eyes and rest.

* * *

WHEN NIGHT COMES

I shall be glad to see the friendly night
Enter, with quiet, shadowed feet, my room,
Brushing from lintels worn the morning bloom,
Sealing the noisy source of sound and sight.
I shall be glad when in the purple light
The ghosts of voices fade, like spent perfume
Of roses in old gardens where the gloom
Of autumn warns the swallows to their flight.

For when the kindly darkness, like the hand
Of some fond mother smooths my brow for sleep,
And I, in peace I fail to understand
Sink softly down as through calm waters, deep,
Forgetting all the feverish dreams I had
By day's deceiving light, I shall be glad.

* * *

TOKENS (To A. M. B.)

(Bud, and bird, and blossom! April is here again!
Varnished leaves in the sunshine, children on
roller skates!
Life in the field and the city! Soft life-giving
rain!
The velvet feel of the evening and a memory that
waits
Like the lilac leaves in April
For a touch of the sun and the rain!)

Lilac Leaves!
On those dusky nights of April
When the lights were lighted
And the elder heads were bending
Over hem and book;
A boy and a girl played a game,
A game of adventure and dare,
And of being unafraid;
Each one in turn faring forth on a fearful journey.

Along wandering paths
Past importunate giants of trees
Through the loamy garden where fresh buried
seeds
Lay waiting a resurrection,
To the lilac bush at the farthest end of the
garden
Where we gathered the tokens of our journey,
We went.

To the end of the garden!
No, to the end of the world,
Through the cold, far-reaching sounds
And the narrow, unplumbed estuaries
Of an unknown ocean
We went.

Silently slipping from out the safe and well-
lighted harbor
Where the fat and snoozing merchant-men lay,
(Waiting a comfortable tide, or a wind in the
shoulder)
Pirates, soldiers of fortune,
Brave-handed free-booters, we sailed
In the teeth of the wind,
Alone;
While the other one waited
As Penelope once, too, waited,
Patient in Ithaca, the return
Of Ulysses.
Out in the dark,
Braving the vast unknown
Of filmy, half-shadowed lights
And trembling, half-lighted shadows
We fared.

Were those birds that stirred in the fir-trees,
Huddled from chill April winds
And the ravenous beak of the night-hawk,
Or the murmur of avenging Cicones
Gathering in thousands on the shore?
And sure in the top of the pine trees
The sirens
Sang of the blue-grey eyes washed blind
In the salt of the ocean,
And the beautiful sun-blanched bones
White as a snow-drop in April.

Through the lace-woven boughs of the persimmon,
The tree of magic, puckering fruit,
Circe was pouring a pale, enchanting liquor
From the crescent glass of the moon;
On the sweet-scented shores of the garden
Where the shy, earthy bulbs
Breathed a woodsy perfume of things growing,
A tired wind slept;
'Twas the land of the lotus-eaters.

And that cry,
Breath-shaking, despairing, out of the black;
No screech-owl that,
But Polyphemus lamenting
His one eye.

So we sailed in the dark,
And slipping again into the harbor,
Safe, well-lighted,
Brought as token to the comrade awaiting,
Gathered on the farthest shore of our journey.
Lilac leaves.

You have set sail again,
Alone,
Out in the dark,
And I know you are not afraid;
While I, I stay in the harbor
And wait for a token;
For you have sailed far out past those western straits
Where the golden bark of the sun
Stops to take tonnage
Ere he turn again east;
Out on the wide, unchartered waters.

Why do you linger?
Have you found in the circling sea-foam
Some island, dragon-haunted,
Where you have broken the serpent charm
That held the Egyptian maiden
Who has wandered down long ages
Seeking a knight,
Who, with three kisses,
Would free her?

Or have you joined the fleet of merry-hearted coasters,
Gay buccaneers,
To sail the infinite seas,
Past Saturn, past Neptune, past Uranus,
On the track of some tail-stretching comet?

Perhaps the great tides have washed your bark down,
Down in the purple-mouthed gulf of the waves,
Down to the quiet caves of the sea
Where the coral flowers bloom;

There amid the dim, half-conscious life
Of the ocean
You sleep
A deep, dreamless sleep;
While I wait for a token,
For lilac leaves.

And only a soft note in the wind,
Or that break in the sparrow's song
As it sang just now,
Or the swiftly changing sheen of the water
As the rolling clouds chase the flying sun,
Tell me that you,
A great-hearted lover of life,
Of adventure,
Of the delights to be garnered from defeat and
despair,
From joy, and clean, swift-running laughter;
A lover
Of the rich wine of earth,
Once rocked in the harbor, safe-sheltered, well-
lighted,
By my side;
And in my lap laid
Lilac leaves.

(Bud, and bird, and blossom! Showers of
laughter and pain!
Tokens of spring in the forest, tokens of spring
in the street!
(Dropped by whose hand?) and a rain
Of flowers in the garden, of flowers that fleet
Like remembered evenings of April;
And lilac leaves in the rain!)

DOWN IN THE PASTURE

We do not understand!
Or else too late we understand
Those who have walked beside us
On the way, and with an ample hand
Have reached us blessings—
Which we accept in idle thanklessness
And stow the unvalued thing away
With other rubbish;
Till with the years there comes another day
When we (like daughters of a mother, dead)
Rummage the musty chests of memory
To find among the clothes we once have worn,
The odds and ends of life, now dull and torn,
A dusty box that holds a shining gem
Treasured for us.
We prize its beauty through our tears;
We did not understand.

These autumn days!
The brown leaves drifting one by one
Down the Chicago streets where the warm sun
Makes golden lanes for feet have wandered far!
These days that drift like drifting leaves!
These jewelled days!
They make me search in that old, dusty chest
That holds my past, and finger once again
The riches treasured there.

A jewelled autumn day
Among the husks of other days!
(And was it yesterday or years ago?)
The pasture still was green
A dancing floor that fitted well the feet
Had trod it; all unseen,

The night before, but left their fairy ring.
There while the sunny afternoon
Swung slowly by,
I watched my father shape a high well sweep,
Balance the beam and firmly fix the rope;
Pausing to throw a word at me, or sing,
In mellow, untaught voice with careless swing,
Lugubrious songs of battle, death and woe.
Black-haired, black-bearded as a pirate,
Strong, and facile of his fingers
Like those brave men who sailed with Drake
Around the world—
(Not one that fate could break)
He seemed to me *that* way
That autumn day.

And was it yesterday or was it years ago?
The browning willows by the pond—
Like some fair woman justly fond
Of her own beauty! One who loves it,
Till in her glass she sees the trace
Of time deep-etched on hair and face—
So did the browning willows brood
On their reflection.
(Just so the willows brood to-day along the still
lagoon.)
The blackbird peered, a brilliant fleck,
Charmed by the iridescence of his neck;
And sparrows—not the ones in early spring
Had tossed their song up to the skies—
But travelled birds
Whose two white feathers in the wing
Showed they had come from far-off lands,
Those lands to which the wild goose flies.
(I saw those sparrows in the park one day.
Ah, yesterday *that* was, not years ago!)

Then when the sweep was mended
My father drew the water
The bright bay mare with gentle eyes
Came trotting with her colt
That rubbed his cold nose 'gainst my cheek
The while his mother looked surprise
At such a colt as I—such lack of legs!
Though courteously she did not speak
But sniffed my father's hand for sugar-lumps.
And as I trotted home close by my father's side
Over the pasture that seemed so wide
'Twould take an hour to cross
He told the tale of Ali Baba and the forty thieves.

Yes, it was years ago;
And then for years I did not understand,
For with the aftertime my father grew
To be—not that black-bearded play-mate that I knew
That sunny, autumn afternoon—
But like a shaven parson, silent, scarred
With mis-adventures.
The hand that gave the bay mare sugar lumps
Could not keep gold;
The tongue that told
The secret of the Arabian cave
Had no pass-word to fortune,
And we, his children, thought it hard,
The life he gave us;
But now I know that generous hand
Gave better gifts than gold;
Now, I understand.

TOMATOES

Tomatoes! They stand there in a row
Inside the grocery!
At times they almost seem to wink
(Like red-cheeked boys whom one sees blink
Around the corners
On nights like Hollow-e'en;
Then run before they are scarcely seen.)
Some people say they are good to eat,
But that is not the reason why
I like tomatoes so.

For once upon a time a little, curly-headed child
Played in a low-ceiled kitchen.
There she saw
A row of red-cheeked rascals on the window-sill
That winked at her. Tomatoes!
Outside a gadding, scarlet vine running at will
Over the garden fence!
And scarlet, on the pantry shelf was stored
A wealth of jelly; apple, grape and plum;
Each shining glass a miser's hoard
Of summer sunshine.

Across the diamond window pane
A spotted, yellow spider spun its web,
A golden shield inlaid with rubies
Like Helen by its beauty it beguiled
The destroying hand.
(I saw that spider yesterday, again, I—
Not that little, curly-headed child.)

She watched the myriad motes that played
And froliced in the level beams
Of those long, sunny streams
Which flowed from every window there;
While islanded in purple shade
The unfathomed depths of gloom were made
Vast continents still to be explored.

And moving swiftly to and fro
Now in the sun that pricked the glow
Of her red cheeks (tomatoes?)
Now in the shade that purpled all her hair
And made her eyes as dark and deep
As wells where untold secrets sleep;
My mother in a yellow bowl, with a blue spoon
Mixed ginger cookies,
Singing the while old country songs,
Forgotten now, unknown to any lips of all the
throngs
That fill these city streets—
I wish that I could hear those songs again!

I hope that all these people—everyone who stops
To gaze in at the windows of the shops
Where ripe tomatoes nod and blink
Where cabbage, pumpkins seem to wink
And nudge each other in a row,
Can see such pictures as I saw
Once on a time—
Oh, long ago.
Tomatoes!

A LETTER to C. W.

(Written from Cape Cod, by a garrulous friend.)

Some summer when you shake a swelling purse
And see the gold like scales of fishes shine,
Come where long, golden days will reimburse
A small expense of thine;
Come to Cape Cod! Pack then with prudent care,
Close and compact, like smooth-skinned dates that fare
To us on dromedaries;
But leave a little nook to tuck there-in
A blue-bound book, sweet as a nut, but thin.

Theocritus! *That* book would take the space
(The one that tells the sly, sea-faring man)
You else would need for linens and for lace.
—Much weight is under ban.—
The Odessey can give the ocean's spell;
Theocritus portrays the land as well;—
Hale, apple-cheeked, old men,
Brown youths who labor in the browning hay,
Sun-bonnet girls whose breath is sweet as bay.

Englished by Andrew Lang. Dear Andrew Lang!
Do you remember how one winter day,
Seeking some tonic to renew life's tang,
We chanced to stray
Upon his picture? Gaunt, marked with pride of race;
Whimsical and rare, with wistful grace
Of dreams half-thwarted;
The face of one, who missing full success,
Still had the kindly power to cheer and bless.

He brings to us whose rougher, western tongue
Has never learned the pure, smooth-voweled
Greek,
The music of the song that Circe sung
To charm Odysseus, sleek;
With him we see the pride of Ilion fall;
Weep with Andromeche upon the wall.
One perfect sonnet, his,
Haled from the shadowy groves of Proserpine,
Compounded of pale loves and salt sea brine.

Here on Cap Cod is old Greek life again,
For here are folk who drag the silent deep
For stores of moss, and grey, sea-gazing men
Whose careful memories keep
The ocean's love; an ancient, chattering crone
Who surely heard the flattering suitors drone
Around Penelope;
Young girls who show the slim, processional
grace
Of classic maidens on John Keats's vase.

Here, clean-limbed youths, who as they reap and
mow
Pass twisted jokes. On bright days women wear
Linens so snowy white they truly show
Nausicaa's house-wife care.
The landscape is one lovely pot-pourri
Of hills, and friendly dunes, and deep-wine sea.
Here we may take (as once before
Among the scattered lakes of Michigan)
The flavor of blue days, Sicilian.

We will grow Pagan. (forget that curious god
Who ruled our fathers with a rod of fear)
Will learn our kinship to the sky and sod,
Things intimate and dear;
With laughing leaves will drink the rain-drop
up
And from the sea-shell's curved, rose-lined' cup,
Sip tranquility;
Rejoice with birds' and bees' and flowers' mirth,
Children and lovers of this rolling earth.

Delay not long! The stern hands of the Fates
Spin on, and when the thread at last has run
A deep and dreamless sleep for us awaits.
Death, I would not shun;
Yet sometimes I have grieved to think, ere long
I shall not hear the robin's homely song
That wakes the morning up;
Evening may fall; I, miss the fair delight
Of seeing the first star that brings the night.

The tide has turned; the waves roll into shore;
The dolorous voices sound from out the deep;
The gold sky darkens; I can write no more.
Last night I heard a Cyclops weep
His fickle nymph. 'Tis thus I long for you,
For your red bathing-cap out in the blue
Among the swimmers.
Come to Cap Cod where gods will reimburse,
With golden coin of joy, the poorest purse.

A REGRET

'Tis not that I do greatly fear to die;
The countless sunsets fading into night,
The countless years in their unending flight
Pass silent on and cease without a sigh;
Yet all the pomp and pageantry of sky
And earth, the wealth and wizardry of light
And shade, the seasons' sumptuous, slow delight,
Die not, but stream in liquid splendor by.
There the regret and not the fear for death!
To lie where no returning blue-bird brings
The thought that April with her scented breath
Is fashioning those fair and fragrant things
Of field and forest! Sleep, nor even hear
The last wild requiem for the dying year!

* * *

MARGARET OF MERIBON

High on the hill the convent stands
And high are the ramparts of heaven,
Where slipping out from the singing bands
The tired angels lean at even.

They gaze far past this tumbling earth
Where their good and ill befell,
Far past the tides of death and birth
Down to the deeps of hell.

Step after step, clean out of sight,
The feet of the saints have trod;
By the weary steps of our convent height,
I climb to the feet of God.

By prayer and fast, by fast and prayer,
I, Martha, the withered nun,
Atone for the sins I sinned down there
As Margaret of Meribon.

For I saw my husband fall 'neath the blow
Of Hugh, my handsome paramour.
Did I wring my hands, bow my head full low?
I donned my gems and danced on the floor
Of the banquet hall, where, (dregs in the wine)
The steel-eyed baron had planted fear
In this wild, laughing heart of mine
Till it hung like a yellow leaf, and sear.

Then it lay, a wayward, fluttering thing
In Hugh of Brittany's mailed hand,
Till he flung it far as the rich men fling
A leper—You understand?

Saying

"Your hair glooms black as the wings of night
While the locks of Clarice are gold in the sun;
And what man would leave the sweet delight
Of a love to win for a love that is won?"

Now he lies in his tower of Brittany
Wrapt in a cloud of golden hair,
While I ply the scourge and bend the knee
With prayer and fast, and fast and prayer.

I give the old abbess courtesies,
I play the organ and lead the choir,
And I sing the dreary litanies
Till my voice grows thin and my fingers tire.

But when from the blue the evening falls
And the quiet winds of twilight blow
Over the hills, I gaze from the walls
On the purple and golden valley below.

And when at the sound of matin prayer
The sun climbs over the highest rim
Of the mountains, upright and fair
My poor worn spirit runs with him.

I follow the long roads up and down,
I kiss the very stones in the street
Of the winding gray-walled feudal town
Where once I walked with heedless feet.

And when at night the smooth earth slips
From under the mad stars' drunken rout
And the little crescent moon-shaving dips
In the flying winds that blow it about,
I gaze far down in the velvet deep
Where the steadfast lanterns shine
And happy peaceful folk are asleep
In pleasant bowers that once were mine.

I watch the cheering wine of the year
Into the mountain-rimmed valley poured,
A great, heart-easing wine, and clear,
And a cup well fit for the festal board!

A cup for the hollow of God's own hand,
More beautiful by far
Than those curious silver cups that stand
On our high-built altars are!

The fragrant valley I loved so well
Where Hugh of Brittany still can ride
(While I am bound by rule and bell)
With the bright-haired Clarice at his side.

He will die in his sins—but on my knees
Up the long and steepy stairs I'll climb,
And hear on a morning that knows no cease
The matin bells of heaven chime.

But Hugh shall sink as sinks a stone
In some quiet lake of a forest dell,
And his soul shall fare on its way alone
Down to the very depths of hell.

A fragrant robe of white will be mine,
And an aureole with a golden rim,
And I shall see the swords that shine
In the mighty hands of the seraphim.

To God will I render courtesies
And sing with the heavenly choir
All the wearisome—sweet litanies,
(Perchance I shall not tire.)

(When I to that heavenly choir shall win,
Will one of the angels begin too soon,
While one forgets when his notes come in
And one sing a little out of tune?)

It may be; but when no one will miss
My voice, to the buttressed walls I will go
And throw down the void a fluttering kiss
To the little valley here below

Where the lights shine through the blue of even
And glad feet trip and bright cheeks glow
While blither than any chant of heaven
The revelers sing a tune I know.

When the angels, wearying at their song
Turn to smile at the pains in hell,
I will join the raptured, gazing throng
And look for that one that I know well.

I shall see from those cloud-built ramparts above
The soul in its agony
Of him whom I loved—loved? Whom I love!
(Would God that I were he.)

(Mary! to whom the sinners make moan,
Let them do as they will with me,
Those angels that guard with bright swords the
throne,
But save Hugh of Brittany!)

* * *

THE EMPTY ROOM

It seemed the room was empty
But I knew you had been there—
Was it an hour ago?
The time goes slow;
Like rows of patient nuns in prayer
The still days wear away my heart.
Yet when I entered, in the room the air
Was tremulous with a form that drew apart.

And now the sunbeams flower upon the wall,
From that green vase the rose leaves fall
Softly down, by some breath stirred,
And truth, upon the stair I heard
Just now your step.
Ah, yes! I surely know
You have been here.
Was it an hour, or was it years ago?

* * *

EVENING

Ah, little house wherein I dwell
Where, with the happy dawn of day,
The golden light of morning fell,
How worn thy lintels are and gray!

The bird that sang above thy door
Has flown into the evening light;
Within, the shadows on the floor
With lengthning fingers point the night.

Ah, little house, so worn and gray!
Soon, soon I see that thou too, must
Upon the night wind pass away
Dissolved to ashes, strewn as dust.

* * *

TEMPERANCE?

Ask me not if I am drunk
With plenteous draughts of Coan wine;
I guaffed, this morn, a breakfast cup,
Three fingers, straight, of pure sunshine.

At ten I lost my senses quite,
My silly head was all a-whirl
When in a foam of skirts, I saw
The silken stocking of a girl.

The blue-bells, in the afternoon,
Drained in a riotous drinking-bout
Immoderate cups of summer rain:
I joined their revels with a shout.

Like moths around a candle light,
Friends, by my evening fire are brought;
I drink a sparkling vintage then
Of rare, intoxicating thought.

Ask me not if I am drunk
When morn and night I sip the wine
The generous hand of life pours out
From bubbling beakers, large, divine.

* * *

A SONG FOR THE MOURNERS

Give us the greatest of griefs from the full-laden
sheaf of sorrows,
But give us to take as our own the fruit of the
tear-furrowed field;
Save us from cringing false hopes and the broken
coward endeavor
To stay with our tearful oblations the hand of a
pliable god.

A woman dies in her prime and the dolorous
sound of lamenting
Fills all the house, till a breath from some
asphodel vale
Brings a fond hope of re-union by a deep and
clear-flowing river;
But who would this same woman be when her
various lovers would greet her?

For her mother would look for the child that she
left in the dawning;
Her lover would seek for his love with the sun on
her bright golden hair;
And her child for a face softly touched with the
fast-falling twilight;
And the woman, herself, for the one that she
knew, and she only.

Flowers that grow from this earth, those flowers
we would gather;
—Do they grow by the smooth-gliding stream
that flows through some valley of dreams?
Then give us our roses for joy and the jasmine
and rue for our mourning,
Give us the flowers of this earth, nor asphodel,
amaranth, nor moly.

We have drunk of the river of life and the waters
are bitter.
—But what do we know of those streams that
spring in some mythical world?
Phlegethon flows not for us nor the sweet,
oblivious Lethe—
Then give us to take of this cup and bravely to
drink it.

GOOD-BY

That day you did not stop to say good-by,
But softly closed the door and went;
No song-bird stirred as you passed by,
Nor grasses to your foot-steps bent.

You did not stay to hold my hand,
Nor promise ever to return;
And to what far mysterious land
You passed, I cannot learn.

By day, no shadow flits across my sight,
No clear voice answers to my cry,
(But from the mothering womb of night
You came, and said "Good-by.")

* * *

REMEMBRANCE

I had forgotten
How in the April showers the clinging violets
—Shy lovers of unfooted nooks—
Bend with the rain-drops;
But the hill-side remembers and burns blue with joy.

I had forgotten
How the single note of the blue-bird
—Like a single string of the first violin—
Preludes the full chorus.
But the mulberry tree in the orchard remembers
And prepares to pay its coming guests
With the coin of purple berries.

I had forgotten
How rose petals float down the flood of summer,
Gold on the early wave of June,
Flushing from pink and crimson to ardent white;
But the moon remembers, every month
floating,
A curled, white rose-petal
In the silent skies.

I had forgotten
How in the deep heart of a woman
Memory, like the lily in the deep pond, blossoms;
But the heart of a woman cannot forget.

* * *

ENVY

It haunts my sunlit, waking dreams,
The yellow primrose of the night
That blooms so quietly it seems
A sweet, frail ghost of spent delight.

She feigns a friendly courtesy
That primrose one he calls his own
And stretches out pale hands to me;
Pale hands? Oh, primroses half-blown!

The color of the primrose shows
In her silk strands of yellow hair,
Rose burnt to crimson, my cheek glows;
Can he find primroses more fair?

It haunts my sunlit, waking hours
That pale primrose that smells of musk
And steals like ghosts of happier flowers
Quietly through the scented dusk.

NAMES

In summer gardens the roses
Fall softly, one by one;
Nor with the death of their petals
Is the tale of their beauty done—
Beauty the ghost of a perfume, beauty a leaping
flame
Haunts the grey walks of dead gardens
And lives on in a name:—
Queen of the Prairie and Sweet Brier,
La France and Cherokee,
Wild Rose, Princesse de Sagen,
Cinnamon, Du Barry,
Red Rambler, proud De Wattville,
Penzance and Jacqueminot,
Bengal, Provence, Tea-rose,
Damask, Heart of Snow!

Lovers who walked in these gardens
Have come to a flowery death,
But their ghosts still haunt the memory
Sweet as the roses' breath;
For beauty and love live ever,
All things else are vain;
The light of their love burns softly
As I name them over again:—
Beatrice, Guinevere, Rosamund,
Iseult of the Irish Sea,
Pale Iseult of Brittian,
Heloise, Nimue,
Sappho, Phaedra, Helen,
Alcestes, Queen half divine,
Medea, Perdita, Juliet—
And mine—and mine!

FORGOTTEN

I fingered over a forgotten love,
Untied the faded bow,
My hand hads bound the letters with—
—Oh, many years ago.—

A little ghost from that far past
Might frighten with its cry
The new love that had lived its time
But had forgot to die.

Not even a little, fluttering ghost
From those old letters came;
I thought to write a name, a date;
I wrote—another's name.

* * *

FAME

Why do you ask me now to that wide banquet hall?
The guests sit ivy-crowned?
Laughter, jest and friendship, and love go round?
Ah! but the first lights of the morning fall
Through high-arched windows,
I hear the first bird sound his morning call,
Night's shadows slip away
Before the dawn of day,
It is late.

Time was when gladly I had bound
My soft, brown hair with chickory, rose and
primrose
To feast with you.
—Crimson, gold and blue—
Time was when I had found your friendship fair
But now it is too late.

For I have found a place
Of peaceful meadows and wide pastures
Where through long, sunny afternoons
I watch the blossoms bud and bloom and fall,
—Crimson and rose and gold—
Bloom and fall.

Where one dead leaf burns brighter than a poppy
wreath
Grown in your sunshine;
My longing hands can scarcely hold the beauty
Of the flowers that grow in these still meadows
of my soul.

Friends, too, I have who gather round a board
as bright
As those quaint jewelled cloths
Are spun by long-legged spiders in the night;
Friends who smile with quiet lips
And drink from filmy goblets blown
By the master workman.

Why do you nake such haste to bring those gifts?
It is too late.

RETROSPECT

An old bent woman cloaked in grey
Goes grumbling on her upland way,
Till 'neath a tree she slips her load
And through green leaves reviews the road:—
She sees with childlike wonderment
In places where her tired feet went,
Tulips deep red and golden bright,
Narcissus, like slim girls white,
Winged' daffodils arise,
Bluetts that smile up at the skies.
She sighs in musing wonderment,
"Is that the way by which I went?"

* * *

DELAY

When you were out at sea, I said
I know the path that we will tread,
With grass and clover overspread,
When you come back to me.

There yellow broom and sweet bay grow;
The scented air of twilight thrills
With the song the brown-thrush spills
Out to his mate below."

At last you came. The path we tread,
But no brown bird sings overhead;
The blossoms of the broom are shed;
My heart is out at sea.

LA MALQUERIDA

Whether willingly or unwillingly
I pluck the white, pellucid flowers that grow out
by my threshhold,
(faces blanched with passion)
it matters not;
or whether a strong, brown hand at twilight
tosses them through my window,
past the drifting curtains,
it matters not.

All night their perfume clings about my brow,
tangles up in dreamy slothfulness the songs that
else at dawn had flown out to the sun-
shine.

Whether willingly or unwillingly I lay these pale
flowers on my breast.
it matters not.

* * *

DIABOLARIE

I would forget him and again be free,
But I am caught and hindered—
Not in the silken skein of memory—
But by his seeming presence in the room.
I cannot brush my hair
But what I feel the pressure of his hand
That rested there—was it last evening?
My purple dress still wears the flushed delight
It knew when his grey eyes
Turned black with pleasure at the sight
Of my slim throat above its folds,
[His eyes are grey. The berries of the bay
In that blue vase are such a grey.]

Outside, upon the slant of April rain
Drifts down the breath of lilacs.
Lilacs! Once again I live that day
Of amorous sunshine touched with pain,
When in a sheltered vale I lay
And he piled lilacs, cool and sweet
Upon my sun-warmed breast and on my feet
Until I saw his face smile down on me—
Through lilacs!

Then how can I forget him, how be free,
When any straying, chance perfume still brings
His presence?
My soul is tangled in the invisible web of things.

* * *

THE GARDEN CITY

I

This city like a garden is
Where many lovely blossoms grow;—
Tulip, and rose, and fleur-de-lis,
Could one but truly know.

Though black as sin the soil may be,
And wet with tears for rain,
Year after year in their beauty,
The flowers bloom again.

My country neighbor talks of trees,
And golden bees, and birds on bough;
But here's a humming hive of bees,
And singing hearts enow.

THE FLOWERS OF THE GARDEN

II

Rose Petals

In country lances at twilight hour,
The white moth from a white cup sips
The treasured wine of some sweet flower,
Then into darkness slips.

That magic of the twilight hour
My city garden also knows;—
Each shop-worn girl blooms out, a flower,
With beauty of a rose.

Oh pale with pride, with passion bright
Down glittering streets where arc-lights blind,
Flung from the hand of coming night,
Rose petals on the wind!

One day for passion, one for pride,
And then—then dawns another day!
What thing of beauty can abide?
They go the flower way.

The sunflower

With beer-flushed face and gleaming star,
And lordly air of high commands,
Ruling the traffic near and far,
This cop, my sun-flower stands.

* * *

Poppies

A drowsy, sun-warmed poppy glows
Among the heads of useful wheat,
Illumining the patient rows
With beauty, heedless, sweet.

So through the streets where labor haunts,
Gilding the way with dusky sheen,
Insouciant and free, she flaunts,
This flaming gipsy queen.

EVENING IN THE GARDEN

III

God walks in gardens where the eve is cool,
  So simple country people say;
By sheltered fragrant path and fringed' pool,
  He passes on his way.

God walks in gardens where the twilight falls
  On city streets, and arc-lights shine
And from the lake the fog-horn, homeless, calls?
  Yes, then God walks in mine.

* * *

FILETTA

Filetta had such little feet
She should have walked on flowers.
A broken slipper lies now in the garden path
  Out in the sleet.
  Filetta had such little feet!

A FOREST POOL

I am a deep, quiet pool, a blue eye shining under the blue sky. The shepherd of those sky pastures drives slow-trailing flocks over my surface—and not one sheep bleats, for the leader has lost his bell. When my lover, the wind, stoops to kiss me, ripples of emotion wrinkle my face.

Sometimes a bird dips a shy wing into my waters; sometimes an irridescent fish flashes his fins above me.

I am a quiet pool, deep with mystery. Down in the dreaming heart of me grow strange, half-guessed creatures which even the Master who fashions the pools of the forests knows but dimly. Perhaps the stars that peep into my bosom at night are searching my secret.

Oh Master and Maker of pools, of little deep-forest pools, lean over me that I may mirror your face in my smooth waters.

* * *

A MORNING STAR

Life stirs and kisses the face of the waters;
Love stirs and wakes the winds from their dreaming,
And the three eternal comrades,
The sun, the wind, and the shower,
Go forth to their endless labor;
Shaping the clouds in the sky
And the ever-enduring mountains,
Painting both heaven and earth in the tiniest dewdrop,
Forming the delicate rose-bud.

My heart awakes from its dreaming
And loves, and looks on beauty;
Loving the rose-bud and rainbow,
The dewdrop and the mountain—
And the light of your eyes—
For life stirs and kisses the face of the waters,
Love stirs and wakes the winds from their dreaming.

* * *

AN EVENING SONG

Quiet are the waves of the waters, and quiet the little winds of evening
That all day long have wandered over the earth,
Driven to and fro by desire;
Desiring the sweetness of the rose,
The deep delights of placid forest pools,
The freedom of the mountain tops
The passion of the desert sands;
But now the restless winds lie quiet in their mother's lap.

Only my heart is like a troubled wave,
A restless wandering wind,
Driven by desire for gifts that never grow on earth,
Hungry for the rose that blooms only in dreams;
But quiet are the waves of the waters,
And quiet the little winds of evening.

IN THE VALLEY OF THE MENONITES

I. The Valley

Friendly the wooded hills that stand
  Guarding the folded vale,
Rounded, as though a mother's hand
Had smoothed a pillow for her child
And bending softly down, had smiled
  To see it fall asleep.

Friendly the folk that plow and sow
  And gather the grain to barn;
Like sleepy brooks that pause in their flow
The stream of life runs quiet there;
Lightly blown on the scented air,
  Peace floats like thistle down.

A pious band in that vale had sought
  Rest from the old world wars;
In the rich new world where their slow tongues
      caught
At Indian names, they had turned the sod
And planted a seed from the word of God
  That says, "Thou Shalt Not Kill."

For a page from some old bible torn
  Had found in that valley its rest.
The word is read both night and morn
While the round of daily living there
Runs to the sound of murmured prayer,
  A brook on well-worn stones.

The low-browed houses, trim and white
  Elbow the big striped barns;
Neat-handed women from morn to night
Comfort the man and love the child;
Martha, herself, might have looked and smiled
  At the careful housewives there.

Bearded men, like bearded wheat,
Bend in the yellow fields;
On the seventh day they set their feet
Towards the fingered spire where their leader reads
The text that rules their human deeds:—
"Thou Shalt Not Kill."

"Thou Shalt Not Kill." The thrush sings free
Safe in the osage hedge;
The squirrel drops his nut from the tree;
Where the tired stream rests by the mill
The sleek-nosed otter slips at will
From under the hanging bank.

"Thou Shalt Not Kill." That is their creed
Wrought in the lives of them.
They had sought a peaceful land for their need,
But now past the hills that shut them in
Come rumors and echoes, shrill and thin,
Sounds from a world at war.

And the shadow of an unspoken fear
Darkens the sun of their peace.
They had learned to call that country dear,
But the single faith they owed to their God
War burned in their souls with a searing rod,
"Thou shalt not kill."

Jesus walked in Galilee
Through fields of ripening grain;
Jesus in his agony
Suffered the length of the daylight hour,
When darkness, opening like a flower,
Made of his pain an end.

II. The Lovers

Under the willows, hidden apart,
The miller's snug house stands.
Hilda, his daughter, stirs his heart
Almost as much as his swift wheels do,
The wheels he loved before he knew
The sound of Hilda's voice.

"The mills of the gods grind slow," he sings,
"While mine run very fast—
Fast as a young girl's heart that swings
From the love of her home to the love of her man—
But the mills of the gods in their turning can
Grind exceedingly fine."

Hilda bends over her oaken chest
Carved with the delicate skill
Of some craft-man's hand, in time unguessed
That worked for love. Rich fantasy
Flowered in the embroidered cloth that she
Stored for her wedding day.

Fine beaten gold is not more fair
Under the gold-smith's hand
Than the burnished flow of her yellow hair
That slips from under her cap's white rim
And follows the line, where her throat, firm and slim,
Is lost in the curve of her breast.

Dark in the windowed square of light
Shows Adolph's swarthy head;
A John the Baptist of impetuous might
Softens his glance as it hangs above
The bending head of his meek little love,
And softly, too, he speaks.

"The ripening grain stands ready to reap,
I am a reaper, too."—
Then his eyes look out to the high well-sweep.
"Johanna and Joseph soon may know
How a mustard seed of love may grow
To shadow the heart's wide field"

For Johanna was holding a smooth, brown cup
To Joseph's thirsty lips.
The purple glooms in her braids tangled up
His mild blue eyes, while under his gaze
Her rich cheeks burned, a peach ablaze
In a warm September sun.

"The mills of the gods grind slow," the voice
Of the busy miller sings.
"A man and a maid have little choice
When the wheels of war call for ripened grain,
For love is a flower that withers in pain
When the whole world turns to war."

Bells! Over the valley, clear
Out from the spire they swing!
Did the wind in the willows whisper fear?
Was the shadow that of a floating cloud
Or a floating dread that might enshroud
The blossom of their love?

A shattered thing, the brown cup slips
From Johanna's frightened hands,
A fluttering prayer moistens Josef's lips,
Adolph's brow thunders to frown,
While Hilda hastily wrinkles down
The linen in her chest.

The clattering wheels of the mill stand still
With a whimper and a groan,
The miller, a dusty form on the sill,
Speaks, like a ghost, their clinging dread,
"The numbers are drawn, the names will be read
Of those who must go to war."

III. The Casting of The Lots

Bearded men like bearded wheat,
Grain for the reaper's hand!
Smooth-haired women in bonnets neat,
The reiterant clang of the bells, a choir
That sings of death, and the fingered spire
That stains the sky's clean cup.

The slow clouds load in the deep blue sky,
Their shadows loaf on the green,
A heavy bee goes droning by
From clover fields where sleek cows graze
And lift their quiet eyes in amaze
At the sound of the noisy bells.

The church is filled with a sibilant sound
From lips that scarcely move;
For every pale-cheeked woman is bound
To ask for a lover, a husband, a son,
To ward off the lot to some other one
Not of her own household.

The pastor reads, "Thou shalt not kill,
That is our laws command;
And who shall the blood of his brother spill
That man is cursed. The country calls
The men to fight; and so Abel falls
Under the hand of Cain.

"Here in our church once more we may pray
To strengthen our young men's hearts—
Our country we love, but we cannot slay
Our brother men, though the bloody scroll
Of suffering martyrs again unroll
And show our very names."

They pray, then out to the public square
The silent people press.
The sleek draft-master stands smiling there.
"See the muscles slide beneath that tan!
These are the boys we are wanting, man,"
He says to his fellows there.

"Render to Caesar the things that are his,"
A grey-beard elder spoke.
"And to God his own. Well, I know this,
My soul is God's." And Adolph's face
Glowed like some chief's of a fighting race
When the trumpets sound for war.

But Josef said, "This land is free,
We children of the land;
The fathers of the flock well see
That we have vowed, so cannot kill;
Then, come what may, we do God's will
And follow his command."

"The numbers are drawn; the lots are cast,"
Slowly the pastor spoke.
"You Adolph and Josef hold you fast
To your spoken faith. You are called; You must go;
Here in our fold may we never know
Of sheep that were led astray.

"We will never wear the clothes of war,"
Both Josef and Adolph swear.
The draft-master smilingly forbore;
"Tell that tale to the Major when
You come to camp; He can deal with men,
He may listen to you."

Josef bent his head in prayer,
Then to Johanna he turned.
But Adolph stretched his hands in the air:—
"That man would be false to his marriage vow
Who would break his faith with his God, when
as now
It is put to the final test."

The miller stood, a Pagan head
Among that pious folk.
"The mills of the gods grind slow," he said,
"But how each little kernel fares,
As the water that turns my mill-wheel cares,
So care the gods for men."

"God marks each sparrow in its fall,"
Sternly the pastor spoke.
"He cares for his children, one and all,
He tempers the wind for the tender sheep,
In the hollow of his hand he will keep
Those who serve him well."

IV. Hilda

They went. And long may Hilda wait
To hear her Adolph's step;
Johanna at milking may linger late,
But no song answers her clear song,
And no hand, eager, brown and strong,
Lightens the heavy pail.

"In the hollow of his hand he will keep
Those who serve him well."
So Hilda murmured in her sleep.
But, well for her she could not see
The cell where Adolph bent his knee
And bowed his head in prayer.

And well she could not hear the scorn
Of the Major's curling lips:—
"Think it over till Sunday morn
And see if pattering prayers in the dark
Will kindle in that cell a spark
To light your pious feet."

"That uniform we will never wear,"
Josef and Adolph said.
The Major spared no time to swear,
"Send them back to the dungeon cell
Without their clothes—Let them freeze a spell
Till they love a uniform."

Night and day! day and night!
Cold and torture and dark,
Till Adolph's beard had turned sheer white,
And Josef's face in its agony
Looked like a monkly travesty
Of Christ, the man of woe.

Bodies that grow near the good brown earth
Are brown and supple and strong,
But men who have drunk of the broad sun's mirth
As he pours out his wine in the ciup of the morn
Wither like flowers when they le forlorn
In a festering prison cell.

"In the hollow of his hand he will keep"—
The waiting Hilda said.
While Johanna stood where the waters sleep
Above the weir, and the miller would sing,
"Winter and summer, they both must bring
The grain to my hungry wheels."

"They are coming home," Hilda's blue eyes shine.
"I saw them in my dream."
And home they came—in a box of pine—
And in fighting clothes—thin, stiff lips will never speak
The words that Hilda must ever seek
To ease the fear at her heart.

"I had his love for a little day,
And though that day has gone,
There is a joy that will light alway
The whirling years, while the wheels grind still
And break the human grain in the mill,"
Johanna said—and smiled.

"That man would be false to his marriage vow
Who breaks his faith with his God.
Was he false?" but only the song
Of the wind in the oak answers Hilda's prayer
And the cry of a jay that has lingered there
Past the fall of the winter snow.

Jesus walked in Galilee
Through fields of ripening grain,
But Jesus in his agony
Suffered the length of the daylight hour,
Then darkness, opening like a flower,
Made of his pain an end.

THE WORK-SHOP

I looked in at the door of the work-shop;
There stood the Master,
Skillful, imperturbable, quiet,
Bending over the work of his hands.
On the walls, on the benches, the floor, were the tools
Curiously shaped and wrought with a workman's true cunning;
No two alike, but each fitted for its own particular purpose.

There, in the work-shop,
[Filled with the sweet smell of shavings and of beautiful things in the making]
I heard—not the Master,
But the various tools, talking and boasting.

The first was a child:
With his little, uncertain hands, he had built, from a pile of wooden bricks,
A house with doors and windows and chimney.
He laughed, a shrill laugh,
Danced on the floor of the work-shop, shouting,
"See what I have made!"

The next was an artist:—
On a stretch of white canvas he had spread his dreams
In subtle, magnificient reds,
Deep-hearted blues that glowed like the orient,
And yellows as pure and clean as the breath of spring.
Then he lighted a cigarette, folded his arms in triumph
And strode with long steps round the room, chuckling,
"See what I have made!"

Then a poet:—
He had woven a beautiful poem,
In pattern and color as curious as a Persian
rug
Into which the weaver has woven his life.
He read his lines and cried,
"See what I have made!"

A mother,
One who pointed with pride to her children,
Bright-haired, clean-limbed youngsters,
Struck a madonna pose and sighed,
"See what I have made!"

There were others, oh, many others,
For the workshop was filled with the boastful
din of the tools.

I looked at the Master,
He stood with his head turned to one side,
A smile on his lips, listening,
Skillful, imperturbable, quiet;
But he never opened his lips to cry,
"See what I have made!"

* * *

REFUGE

I dreamed of you as some great, spreading tree
Among whose leaves I could with certainty
Fashion my nest;
I thought to find safe shelter there
From storm, and flowering pleasure when the
day was fair,
You seemed to be
So wise and strong.

But now I know you as a branch that sways
With every summer wind that round you plays,
  Now I am blest;
Love for frail things exceeds in tenderness
The love for strong—attains to perfect lovliness
  Through perilous ways,—
  And lasts as long.

* * *

CONSOLATION

Now he is dead;
And you can weep, wear black and bow your
    head,
Embalm your sorrow in pale, scented flowers,
Display it to your friends for countless hours,
Until you quite forget the face
Of him you mourn.
In all this show I have no place,
But I must smile and seem content the while.
  Yet I am not forlorn;
For when your treasured griefs shall fade away,
  Like human beauty in decay,
  A radiant gem remains to me,
    Unchangeable and clear,—
      My memory!

CRITICISM

You hold a mirror for your various friends,
To show their gross deformities—and grace,
  We look therein to see—
    Your face.

INSISTENCE

He will not come for any strident call,
Nor when the house, ablaze with noon-time light,
  Is garnished bright;
But when at last the eager fingers fall
Tired, then with the night
Through cool, green meadows where the dew lies
      sweet,
  Love comes with quiet feet.

CHANGE

When our new day awoke you murmured, sad:–
"The light of yesterday was sweet to me;
I fear for what to-morrow's dawn may be;
Give me the well-known love that once I had."

The old earth spins around with endless change;
Never the same star brings the evening gloom,
Never the same flower for the spring's first
    bloom,
But love is love although his face is strange.

Dear Heart, rejoice that with each April morn
A brighter radiance lies upon the hills,
And by the little brooks whose laughter fills
The listening ear, fresh violets are born.

OVER THE WALL

The world swung quiet by
For nothing seemed to happen there
Nothing of joy nor grief, hope nor despair,
But I—
I stood on tip-toe, my chin level with the wall
Someone had built so tall around me.
I saw a truant path bordered by bitter sweet,
Would fit the feet of any wanderer,
Itself a wanderer up the hill.
Down in the thick-leaved mulberry tree
A rascal cat-bird took his fill
Of song, and purple berries.
That blue that lay so still along
The green horizon could but be
The eye of the blue sea.
Then one black night
When thieves had stolen all the light
A star leaned down and smiled at me.

* * *

THE EGOIST

I carry a candle, so carefully, so carefully,
Climbing a long flight of stairs,
Shading the flame with my hand,
Watching with fear in my eyes lest the wind
should flicker it out—
With fear in my eyes—my eyes that do not see
the morning sun shining in through the
window,
I carry a candle, so carefully, so carefully.

ASPHODEL

Beautiful you are, as the play, in spring of shade
beneath beech trees;
And grace you have, the grace of one long wave
breaking in calm, blue seas.
Laughter is yours, the laughter of green leaves
after an April rain,
But you are cold, as cold as starlight on ferns of
a frosted pane.

Therefore I bring you dream flowers, pale scent-
less blossoms that grow by a quiet stream,
White petals I spread for your feet, with white
petals crown you—
But, in a dream!

* * *

THE EARTH LOVER

My body died at twelve last night
And I, a naked soul,
Went through that dreadful pass of light
With a thousand more, who took their flight
While the midnight bell did toll.

As birds wing south when summer is past
And their cry through the night is born,
So on the wave of the wind's wild blast
We fled away; fast, so fast
To the gate of that other morn:—

Flames that burned with the fragrance of flowers,
Cardinal, emerald, blue,
Violet pure as April showers,
Yellow pale as sunset hours,
White, like frozen dew:—

Singing they went, those flower-like bands,
With voices soft as rain;
But I, I hid my face in my hands,
And still I longed for the dear earth lands
And the grace of my body again.

My body died at twelve last night;
I fled, a naked soul,
And a wind from the south with perfume and light
Went sighing the lost earth's green delight
While the midnight bell did toll.

* * *

THE END

I am tired now and I shall go to bed,
Pull up the comforts right around my head,
(I hope they are made of eider-down)
And go to sleep.
And I shall dream neither of Satan's frown
Nor of a heavenly crown.
You poor, vexed souls who have more work ahead,
Don't envy me and weep!

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